

**United States
Department
of Agriculture**

**Forest Service
Pacific
Northwest
Region**

1997



**Decision Notice
And
Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Replacement Volume
Environmental Assessment**

USDA-Forest Service
Siskiyou National Forest
Chetco and Gold Beach Ranger Districts
Curry County, Oregon

Introduction

Section 2001(k)(3) of the Rescission Act (Public Law 104-19) and the September 17, 1996 Settlement Agreement in Northwest Forest Resource Council v. Glickman and Babbitt directs the USDA Forest Service to provide alternative timber to replace timber sale units under contract that are occupied by marbled murrelets, a federally listed threatened species. Under the act and the agreement, such alternative timber must be "an equal volume of timber, of like kind and value, which shall be subject to terms of the original contract" or is otherwise acceptable to the Purchaser. Designation of alternative timber must be done in consultation and agreement with the Purchaser of the timber sales.

Alternative timber must be provided in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines of the Siskiyou Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

Changed Conditions After Issuance of the Environmental Assessment

The Chetco and Gold Beach Ranger Districts of the Siskiyou National Forest prepared an environmental assessment for a proposal to provide approximately 8 million board feet of alternative timber (Replacement Volume) for units of the Lobster, Spur Trigger, Sugar Cube, Winriver and Taylor Ranch Timber Sales that are occupied by marbled murrelets. The Purchaser for these timber sales is CLR Timber Holdings, Inc.

An estimate of acreage, volume, and road construction mileage was made for the environmental assessment and is listed in Table 1. As noted at the bottom of Table 1, these estimates would be updated following unit layout completion. Unit layout is close to final completion and a new estimate of acreage and volume is listed in Table 2. The estimate of road construction mileage has not changed from what is listed in Table 1. The acreage and volume in Table 2 are based on actual measurement, traverses and timber cruise. Review of the tables show the acreage estimate is similar, 326 acres versus 321 acres, while the volume estimate is 8,514 MBF more than the original estimate.

Table 1. Estimates of Acreage and Volume for the Environmental Assessment

Unit Number	Estimated Acres	Estimated Volume (MBF)	Road Construction (miles)
CHETCO RANGER DISTRICT			
Quail Prairie Creek Watershed			
CR-15	19	285	----
CR-16	10	100	----
CR-18	9	135	0.08
CR-20	10	250	0.04
CR-21	13	156	0.08
CR-22A	10	200	0.21
CR-23	14	210	0.08
CR-24	12	120	0.08
Subtotal	97	1,456	0.57
Basin Creek Watershed			
CR-26	20	400	0.05
CR-27	14	420	----
CR-28	13	260	----
CR-29	12	144	----
CR-31	7	84	----
Subtotal	66	1,308	0.05
Chetco Subtotal	163	2,764	0.62
GOLD BEACH RANGER DISTRICT			
Lawson Creek Watershed			
AD-5	33	998	0.30
AD-6	14	420	0.15
R-6	9	225	0.10
R-9	9	270	----
R-10	60 ¹	2,400	0.30
R-11	28	980	0.30
T-5	10 ¹	350	0.30
Subtotal	163	5,643	1.45
Totals ²	326	8,407	2.07

¹ Unit R-10: Fifteen acres are in Wake Up Rilea Watershed, 45 acres are in Lawson watershed. Unit T-5: One to two acres are on ridge top in Quosatana watershed, eight to nine acres are in Lawson Watershed.

² The acreage, volume and road construction mileage are estimates and would be updated following completion of sale layout. The unit numbers and timber sale name(s) may be different than what is used in the planning phase of this proposal.

Table 2. Estimates of Acreage and Volume Following Unit Layout. Acreage is based on traverses and volume is based on timber cruise.

Unit Number	Estimated Acres	Estimated Volume (MBF)
CHETCO RANGER DISTRICT		
Quail Prairie Creek Watershed		
CR-15	16	631
CR-16	9	625
CR-18	10	675
CR-20	12	791
CR-21	12	577
CR-22A	22	446
CR-23	12	441
CR-24	11	298
Subtotal	104	4,484
Basin Creek Watershed		
CR-26	22	664
CR-27	10	503
CR-28	12	405
CR-29	12	161
CR-31	12	274
Subtotal	68	2,026
Chetco Subtotal	172	6,510
GOLD BEACH RANGER DISTRICT		
Lawson Creek Watershed		
AD-5	27	1,497
AD-6	14	660
R-6	8	259
R-9	11	706
R-10	54	4,997
R-11	25	1,697
T-5	10	655
Subtotal	149	10,411
Totals	321	16,921

Decision

I have decided to implement the proposed action as described in the Replacement Volume Environmental Assessment. This action will harvest 16.9 million board feet on 321 acres. Approximately 8 million board feet of this total is alternative timber that will be provided to CLR Timber Holdings, Inc. as directed by Section 2001(k)(3) of the Rescission Act (Public Law 104-19) and the September 17, 1996 Settlement Agreement in Northwest Forest Resource Council v. Glickman and Babbitt.

I have decided the additional volume that is a part of this action and not needed for alternative timber for CLR Timber Holdings, Inc. will: (1) be offered to Scott Timber Company for alternative timber under the Rescission Act for units of Father Oak and Toastberry Timber Sales; and/or, (2) be offered for future programmed timber sale(s). This possibility was stated in the environmental assessment on page 3 and I find the effects of harvesting all of the units in the proposed action were appropriately disclosed in the environmental assessment. This decision is based on the finding that the change in the estimate of volume does not change the effects disclosed in the environmental assessment. The environmental effects were based on acreage, not volume. The estimate of acreage for the environmental assessment and the actual measurement is essentially the same.

This decision tiers to the Siskiyou National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan, 1989) as amended by the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (ROD, 1994). My decision incorporates by reference the Lawson Creek Watershed Analysis (April, 1997), the Quosatana Creek Watershed Analysis (February, 1996), and the Chetco River Watershed Analysis (April, 1996).

The following specific information concerning the timber harvest, other projects, mitigation measures, and monitoring are part of this decision.

Location

Timber harvest units are located in matrix and partial retention land allocations as described in the Siskiyou Forest Plan (1989) and the ROD (1994). Harvest units are located in the Quail Prairie and Basin Creek watersheds of the Chetco Ranger District (T.38S.,R.12W.,S.35; T.39S., R12W., S.1,2,3,14,22,23) and the Wildhorse Ridge area (primarily Lawson Creek watershed) of the Gold Beach Ranger District (T.36S.,R.12W.,S.5,7,8,19; T.36S.,R.12½W.,S.24; T.37S., R.12½W., S.12,13; T.37S.,R.13W.,S.12).

Logging Systems and Road Construction

All units will be skyline yarded with the exception of small portions of CR-18, CR-20, CR-22A, CR-24, AD-6, R-6, R-10, R-11, and T-5 that will be tractor yarded. Tractor logging will be limited to periods of dry soil conditions, generally from July 1 to October 1. Tractor yarding will

be limited to areas with less than 30 percent slope. Skid trails will be designated prior to use and will not occur in Riparian Reserves. The skid trails will be a minimum of 100 feet apart.

About 2.1 miles of new road will be constructed with this project. Newly constructed roads will be closed following logging or after slash burning and tree planting. The roads will be closed by tank traps and scarified, out-sloped, and water-barred as appropriate. The new roads will not be constructed in or across Riparian Reserves.

In addition to the new road construction, thirty-seven miles of road along the haul route will be reconstructed or maintained with this project. This will occur on Roads 1107, 1376, 1909, 3318, 3680 and their associated spur roads. Reconstruction and maintenance activities include: reconditioning or grading of the roadbed, brushing, surfacing, cleaning culverts or ditches, and replacing or installing drainage structures (culverts, waterbars, dips).

Riparian Reserves

I have decided to modify interim Riparian Reserve boundaries to meet site-specific geomorphic and ecological conditions and to meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives (ROD, p. B-13). Riparian Reserve boundaries designated by the interdisciplinary team will protect the important physical and biological processes occurring in those streams. The Chetco River and Lawson Creek Watershed Analyses provide the contextual framework for delineating Riparian Reserve widths. The critical hillslope, riparian, and channel functions and processes identified in the Watershed Analyses and the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives will be maintained. Generally, the Riparian Reserve boundaries are designated at or beyond the slope break to the streams. Timber harvest, road construction, and tractor skid trails will not occur within Riparian Reserves.

All of the harvest units on the Chetco Ranger District have Riparian Reserves except units CR-27 and CR-29. The designated widths for intermittent streams will range from approximately 50 feet to 180 feet on each side of the stream. The designated widths on the perennial, non-fish bearing streams will range from approximately 125 feet to 350 feet on each side of the stream. No changes from interim widths will occur for Riparian Reserves for fish-bearing streams (Quail Prairie Creek).

On the Gold Beach Ranger District, Riparian Reserves will be designated for intermittent and perennial, non-fish bearing streams in units AD-5, AD-6, R-6, R-9, and R-11. The designated widths of the Riparian Reserves for the intermittent streams will range from approximately 30 feet to 180 feet on each side of the stream. The designated widths of Riparian Reserves for perennial, non-fish bearing streams will range from approximately 150 to 300 feet on each side of the stream.

Prescribed fire

I have decided to use prescribed fire to treat logging slash on all harvest units for fire hazard reduction and for site preparation for reforestation. All units are within a Class II Airshed. The units in the Quail Prairie Creek Watershed and two of the units on the Gold Beach Ranger District are two to three miles to the west of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, a Class I Airshed. The City of Grants Pass is the nearest designated area listed in the Oregon Smoke Management Plan and is 34 to 36 miles to the east. Grants Pass and the surrounding areas were designated as a PM-10 (Particulate Matter 10 microns and smaller) non-attainment zone beginning in November, 1993. The communities of Agness, Gold Beach and Brookings and the campgrounds in the Rogue and

Chetco River corridors could potentially receive smoke from prescribed fire activities. All burning will be conducted under the direction of the State of Oregon Smoke Management rules and daily advisories. Consultation with a Smoke Management Forecaster will take place prior to burning to avoid adverse effects to the Kalmiopsis Wilderness (Class I Airshed) and the Grants Pass Designated Area. Forest Wide Standard and Guideline 8-1 will be met with this action.

Additional Projects Associated with this Action

I have decided that following prescribed burning, harvest units will be reforested with Douglas-fir seedlings. Some disease-resistant sugar pine and Port-Orford-cedar may also be planted in the appropriate Gold Beach Ranger District units if available.

I have decided that if Sale Area Betterment funding from the timber sale(s) or appropriated funding is available, the following projects will be completed. If funding is not available for all projects, the District Ranger for each district will be responsible for determining the priority in which these projects will be completed.

- Harvest units will be manually released and plantations near harvest units will be precommercially thinned.
- Noxious weed sites of scotch broom, french broom, yellow star thistle, and gorse will be treated in the project area (Roads 1107, 1107550, 1107570, 1909, 1909050, 3318, 3318200, and 3318250). Possible treatments include pulling, covering, burning, and/or competitive planting.
- An estimated 0.3 miles of old road in unit CR-15 will be closed, fill slopes pulled back, and natural drainage restored..
- The 1909050 and 1909054 roads will be closed and culverts and associated fills will be removed following burning and tree planting operations. All-terrain-vehicle (ATV) access will be maintained. To enable restoration of these roads, logging operations on CR-20, CR-21, and CR-22A will take place prior to other units in that timber sale contract.
- Fish habitat structures in Quail Prairie Creek will be maintained.
- For units on the Chetco Ranger District, one tree per acre in each unit will be topped or girdled to create long-term cavity-nesting wildlife habitat and one nest box will be placed on each topped or girdled tree for short-term habitat. For Gold Beach Ranger District, two trees per acre will be topped or girdled and two nest boxes per acre will be placed for cavity-nesting wildlife habitat. The prescription is different for the two districts because the Chetco units have a greater number of existing snags than the Gold Beach units.
- A *Haplopappus arborescens* (sensitive plant) site along Road 1107 will be treated by removing trees and brush in a 50 to 100 foot radius and burning the site to improve plant growth.
- Slash and brush will be removed from two pond sites along Road 1909 to improve bat access. Three roost boxes for bats and three bird nest boxes will be placed at each site.

- All unrocked landings and temporary roads will be scarified. Portions of the harvest units will be seeded with 10 pounds per acre of native grass seed to provide for wildlife forage, reduce surface erosion, and prevent weed establishment. Areas that could be seeded include burned landing slash piles, skid trails, scarified landings, temporary roads, and other areas. If native grass seed is not available, non-persistent, non-native grasses may be considered.
- Sorrel Meadow, which is approximately 60 acres on Gold Beach Ranger District, will be burned to promote native grasses and forage value. Small conifers, about 4 to 12 inches in diameter, are over-topping white oaks and encroaching on the meadow and will be slashed prior to burning. Twenty-five nest boxes will be placed in Sorrel Meadow after burning.

Additional Mitigation Measures Associated with this Action

I have decided the following mitigation measures are applicable to this action and will be employed:

- To prevent the spread of Port-Orford-cedar root disease and noxious weeds, logging equipment will be washed prior to entering National Forest System lands. For the Gold Beach harvest units, these additional measures are needed to prevent the spread of Port-Orford-cedar root disease: limit road work, yarding and hauling to dry conditions; for unit R-9, limit these operations to dry conditions within June 1 to October 1; work on undiseased units first (R-9, R-10, R-11, T-5) before other units in that timber sale contract; work on the undiseased north end of unit AD-5 first, then move to the diseased south end; and wash yarding and loading equipment before leaving southeast landing of AD-5. Undiseased water sources on Roads 3318130 and 3680350 or from town will be used for washing equipment.
- Green tree retention areas (15 percent of stand minimum) will be designated in accordance with the ROD (p. C-41). These areas will also be designated in the harvest units to meet visual quality objectives (VQO's) of partial retention along Road 1909 and modification along Road 3318. A green tree retention area will be designated along the boundary of unit R-9 to protect potential bat habitat adjacent to the unit. A green tree retention area will be designated around the only redwood tree in unit CR-18. In addition to the green tree retention areas, individual wildlife reserve trees will be designated to meet existing and future snag habitat needs. Five trees per acre will be designated in the Quail Prairie Creek units, 3 trees per acre will be designated in the Basin Creek units, and 2.5 trees per acre will be designated in the Gold Beach Ranger District units.

All existing down trees, down logs, and standing dead trees will be retained. If standing dead trees need to be felled for safety reasons, they will be left on the ground. The existing dead trees (standing or down) and the live trees retained in green tree retention areas and for wildlife reserve trees will meet future down wood requirements.

Northern spotted owl, Del Norte salamander, and sensitive plant surveys have been completed for all proposed harvest units. No seasonal restrictions are required for northern spotted owls. No protective measures are required for sensitive plants. Del Norte salamander sites will be excluded from the harvest units in accordance with the ROD (p. C-28).

- Marbled murrelet surveys (two year protocols) have been completed for all units except R-10. One year of surveys have been completed for unit R-10 and second year surveys will be completed in Summer, 1998. No harvest can occur in unit R-10 and a seasonal restriction for unit R-11 will apply until the surveys are completed. For unit R-11, logging operations will not be allowed from April 1 to August 5. From August 6 to September 15, operations will be limited to between two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset. If surveys of unit R-10 determine murrelets are present, then the unit will be dropped and the seasonal restriction for unit R-11 will continue. If murrelet presence is not found in unit R-10, both R-10 and R-11 will be harvested with no restrictions.
- A landing area at the end of the 1909050 road is being used for dispersed camping and ATV access. The landing will be used for a truck turnaround for units CR-21 and CR-22A. The landing will need to be enlarged. This can be accomplished by placing fill on the outside edge of the landing. To maintain soil stability in this area, landing enlargement and hauling will occur during the dry season. Fill material will be pulled back following operations and not left on the outside margin during the wet season. The landing will be returned to its existing condition and sloped to drain to the west along the rock outcrop.

Monitoring

Monitoring activities for this proposal will be consistent with the 1991 revisions of the Siskiyou National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan, Appendix D. Monitoring activities will include:

- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife may monitor this project as a part of their periodic compliance checks of fish and wildlife standards and guidelines on National Forest System lands.
- The number of snags and deformed trees remaining after harvest will be monitored. A comparison of the effectiveness and use of wildlife trees created by various methods (bottom girdling, topping with explosives, etc.) will be conducted.
- Native grass seeding monitoring will be conducted to determine: success of germination and establishment; wildlife use of seeded areas; and effectiveness of the seeding to prevent exotic weed establishment.
- Noxious weed sites will be monitored for effectiveness of treatments and to determine if follow-up actions are necessary.
- Post-activity monitoring will determine the effectiveness of the Port-Orford-cedar disease control strategy for this proposal. Objectives for each harvest unit will be determined based on areas of common disease status (diseased, undiseased, intermittent disease) and logical physical boundaries (gated areas, road segments, sale units, etc.).

- Del Norte salamanders in unit AD-6 will be monitored to determine whether or not the proposed buffer established to protect the salamanders is successful. The basis for this monitoring is to insure compliance with the Forest Plan as amended by the ROD (Forest Plan S&G 4-8 and 4-1 and ROD, p. C-28). The hypothesis is that there will be no difference between pre-harvest salamander numbers and post-harvest salamander numbers. A control block will be used to insure that surveys are showing true population changes rather than just differences that may be caused by the timing or season of the survey.

Rationale for this Decision and Forest Plan and Legal Compliance

In making my decision, I have studied the analysis for the Replacement Volume Environmental Assessment; the goals, objectives, standards and guidelines of the Siskiyou Forest Plan as amended by the ROD; the information contained in the Chetco River, Lawson Creek, and Quosatana Creek Watershed Analyses; the letter from the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center and the Forest Service response to that letter; and the input from the interdisciplinary team and the wildlife biologists from the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service.

Based on these documents and analysis, I make the following findings:

- I find the alternative timber provided by this decision is in compliance with Section 2001 (k)(3) of the Rescission Act (Public Law 104-19) and the September 17, 1996 Settlement Agreement in the Northwest Forest Resource Council v. Glickman and Babbitt. This action is in compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Biological Opinions issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (October 18, 1996) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (March 18, 1997). It is also in compliance with the Regional Environmental Impact Statement for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation (1988).
- I find the alternative timber that is provided meets the Standards and Guidelines of the Siskiyou Forest Plan as amended by the ROD. The harvest units are in the matrix (MA-14) and partial retention (MA-13) land allocations. The ROD states, "most timber harvest and other silvicultural activities will be conducted in matrix...." (ROD, p. C-39). The primary management goal is to obtain a full yield of timber within the capability of the land and the management requirements of other resources (Forest Plan, p. IV-139). Harvest units CR-15, CR-16, CR-18, CR-23, and CR-24 are located along the 1909 road of the Chetco Ranger District and are in the partial retention land allocation (MA-13). Production of wood products is a management goal in this land allocation, but the management activity is conducted such that it is subordinate to the character of the landscape (Forest Plan, p. IV-135).
- I have decided that any additional timber not needed to meet the requirements of the Rescissions Act will be offered as a future timber sale(s). This meets the goals of the Siskiyou Forest Plan. I base this decision on the finding that the environmental effects of harvesting all of the units in the proposed action were disclosed in the environmental assessment. The change in volume from the estimate in the environmental assessment to the volume based on the timber sale cruise does not change the environmental effects disclosed in the assessment. The effects are based on acreage, not volume, and were appropriately disclosed in the environmental assessment.

- I recognize in making this decision that late-successional habitat will be reduced by 149 acres in the Lawson watershed and 172 acres in the Chetco watershed in the short term. I find this reduction is within the standards and guidelines for the matrix land allocation (ROD, p. C-44). Over the long term, it is expected that late-successional habitat will increase due to the land allocations at both the watershed and district level.
- I recognize that reduction of late-successional habitat will have adverse effects to the species dependent on that habitat, including northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets. I recognize the Biological Evaluation for northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets has a determination of "May Affect, and is Likely to Adversely Affect". I recognize the harvest of unit R-9 will result in a reduction of 9 acres of suitable owl habitat for a northern spotted owl pair, further reducing the acreage below the 1360 acre threshold. This will result in a "take" of this owl pair. I find this "take" is allowed, because this action meets the Terms and Conditions of the October 18, 1996 Biological Opinion from the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service. I find the effects of reduction of late-successional habitat, including suitable northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat, were disclosed in the environmental assessment. I find the cumulative effects of harvest of late-successional habitat were analyzed in the FSEIS for the ROD which this decision tiers to and the harvest meets the standards and guidelines of the matrix land allocation (ROD, 1994).
- I recognize there is a risk of increased streamflow, sediment production and turbidity from timber harvest and road construction associated with this action. The interdisciplinary team has reviewed the road locations, timber harvest units, and Riparian Reserves. The new road construction will be located on stable, often ridgetop locations. Road construction, reconstruction and maintenance will follow the standards and guidelines of the Siskiyou Forest Plan and the ROD. I agree with the interdisciplinary team's determination that the effects of this action will be short-term, will not affect the main channels downstream, and will meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives. This action is in compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the March 18, 1997 Biological Opinion from the USDC National Marine Fisheries Service. Based on this evidence, I find this action is within an acceptable level of risk.
- This action is within the range of Northern California/Southern Oregon coho and Klamath Mountains Province steelhead. I recognize the Biological Evaluations for coho and steelhead has a "Likely to Adversely Affect" determination. For Chetco Ranger District, this determination is due to the risk of a small increase in turbidity for a short duration. Although no sediment delivery is anticipated, the risk can not be considered negligible. For Gold Beach Ranger District, this determination is due to the increase in disturbance on 149 acres in the transient snow zone that does not move that portion of the Lawson watershed (half of a percent) towards recovery. The Biological Evaluations also include a risk assessment that rates the Consequence of Adverse Effect as Low and the Likelihood of Adverse Effect as Low. The Biological Evaluations determined the effects described above will be negligible to the populations of coho and steelhead. I agree with the determination of the interdisciplinary team that this action meets Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives. This action is in compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the March 18, 1997 Biological Opinion from the USDC National Marine Fisheries Service. Based on this evidence, I find the effects of this action to the coho and steelhead to be within an acceptable level.

- I find that the road construction planned with this action is within the standards and guidelines for Key Watersheds (ROD, p. B-19). The Lawson Creek watershed is the only Key Watershed where road construction is taking place with this action. There are 1.45 miles of new road construction planned in the watershed, and 9 miles have been decommissioned, resulting in an overall decrease of 7.55 miles in the Key Watershed.
- I find the modification of interim Riparian Reserve boundaries will meet site-specific geomorphic and ecologic conditions and will meet Aquatic Conservation objectives and standards and guidelines of the ROD (p. B-13). I find the interdisciplinary team's designations of Riparian Reserve boundaries will protect the important physical and biological processes occurring in those streams. I find these Riparian Reserves boundaries will meet the critical hillslope, riparian, and channel functions and processes identified in the Chetco River and Lawson Creek Watershed Analyses and the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives will be maintained.
- I find Heritage Resources, sensitive plants, and Del Norte salamanders will not be adversely affected with this action.
- I find that with the mitigation measures included with prescribed burning plans, the air quality of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, the City of Grants Pass, and other towns and cities in the vicinity of this action will be adequately protected. I find that the risk of a prescribed fire escaping from the project area has been assessed and mitigated. I find the risk to be within an acceptable level.
- I recognize this action has a higher level of risk for the spread of Port-Orford-cedar root disease than does the no action alternative. However, with the mitigation measures prescribed for this action, I find the risk to be within an acceptable level.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on my review of the environmental assessment and its analysis file and supporting documents, I find no extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause this action to have significant effects on the human environment that have not already been analyzed in the Siskiyou Forest Plan and the ROD, 1994. I make this finding knowing there is a change in volume from the estimate in the environmental assessment and the actual measurement from the timber cruise. I find that the environmental effects in the assessment are based on acreage, not volume, and were appropriately disclosed in the environmental assessment. I have reviewed the guidelines for assessing "significance" at 40 CFR 1508.27. I find that:

- This action is of limited context and intensity and has no significant environmental effects, individually or cumulatively, to the quality of the human environment.
- There are no unique characteristics associated with the area to be affected by my decision. There are no park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or ecologically critical areas that will be affected by my decision.

- The effects on the quality of the environment are not likely to be highly controversial. One letter was received during the public comment period for the environmental assessment. I find the Forest Service has adequately responded to the comments and concerns contained in that letter.
- No highly uncertain effects on the quality of the environment or unique and unknown risks are involved.
- My decision will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. This action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.
- My decision will not adversely affect areas listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
- Public health and safety will not be adversely affected. This action will not violate any Federal, State, or local laws.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action Alternative

The no action alternative was considered. I decided not to select this alternative for the following reasons: (1) the no action alternative will not meet Section 2001(k)(3) of the Rescission Act (Public Law 104-19) and the September 17, 1996 settlement agreement in *Northwest Forest Resource Council v. Glickman and Babbitt*, and (2) the no action alternative will not meet the goal of the Siskiyou Forest Plan to provide a sustained yield of resource outputs.

Scoping

Public comment concerning the proposed action was requested through a legal notice published in the *Curry Coastal Pilot* (Brookings, Oregon), the *Curry County Reporter* (Gold Beach, Oregon), and the *Daily Courier* (Grants Pass, Oregon) newspapers on May 7, 1997 and by a mailing to those members of the public who receive the District Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) for Chetco and Gold Beach Ranger Districts. Two letters were received, one not opposed to the proposed action and one letter requesting the environmental assessment when it was completed (See Analysis File, Public Involvement). There were no requests for consideration of alternatives to the proposed action. The project was also listed in the Chetco and Gold Beach Ranger District's Schedule for Proposed Actions, published quarterly, from April, 1997 to October, 1997.

A legal notice announcing the availability of the environmental assessment for public review and comment was published on August 19, 1997 in the *Daily Courier* and August 20, 1997 in the *Curry Coastal Pilot* and the *Curry County Reporter*. The legal notice was also mailed to the Chetco and Gold Beach SOPA mailing lists. The review period was from August 20, 1997 to September 19, 1997. One letter from Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center was received concerning the environmental assessment (See Analysis File, Public Involvement).

A summary of the comments and the Forest Service response has been included as an appendix to the Environmental Assessment.

The following Agencies were directly contacted concerning this project: the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon; the USDC National Marine Fisheries Service, Portland, Oregon; and the State Historic Preservation Office, Salem, Oregon. Wildlife biologists from the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service field reviewed units R-10 and T-5 on April 4, 1997. They concurred with the District Biologist's determination that unit R-10 was marginal marbled murrelet habitat and surveys to protocol were needed.

Appeal Rights

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Any written Notice of Appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215 and only those persons who have previously commented on the proposed action or the EA may appeal this decision. The Notice of Appeal must be postmarked within 45 days of the date the legal notice of this decision appears in the Grants Pass *Daily Courier*. The Notice of Appeal must be filed with:

Bob Williams (Appeal Deciding Officer)
Regional Forester
ATTN: 1570 APPEALS
PO Box 3623
Portland, OR 97208-3623

Implementation

This decision will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR 215. The Replacement Volume portion of this decision will be implemented through modification of the original timber sale contracts. For CLR Timber Holdings, Inc., those contracts are Lobster, Spur Trigger, Sugar Cube, Winriver, and Taylor Ranch. If there is agreement with Scott Timber Company, the timber sale contracts that will be modified are Father Oak and Toastberry. Any additional timber volume that may be available through this decision will be offered for sale in the future with the Devil Quail Timber Sale and the Shelf Timber Sale.

Contact Person

For further information regarding the projects that will be implemented by this decision, you may contact Michael Frazier, District Ranger, or Bill Blackwell, Project Team Leader, at the Gold Beach Ranger District, 29279 Ellensburg, Gold Beach, OR 97444, (541) 247-3600.

/S/ J. MICHAEL LUNN
Forest Supervisor

Date